

IN THE CLAIMS:

In this amendment, claims 77-96 and claims 116-121 are canceled. New claims 122-138 are added. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A method for communicating information between a first seller and buyers in a negotiating room associated with an on-line group-buying sale having featured item, comprising:

receiving the buyers in the negotiating room, wherein the negotiating room provides support for communications about the on-line group-buying sale among the buyers and the first seller;

receiving an initial price for the featured item from the first seller;

initiating the on-line group-buying sale for the first featured item after receiving the initial price from the first seller;

transmitting communications from the buyers to the first seller via the negotiating room, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the featured item;

producing a first flash demand curve for the first featured item unit offers for the first featured item;

providing the first flash demand curve to the first seller; and

receiving a modified price for the first featured item from the first seller.

2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the on-line group-buying sale has a second featured item associated with a second seller, the method further comprising:

receiving an initial price for the second featured item from the second seller;

initiating the on-line group-buying sale for the second featured item after receiving the initial price from the second seller;

transmitting communications from the buyers to the second seller via the negotiating room, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the second featured item;

producing a second flash demand curve for the second featured item using the offers for the second featured item and providing the second flash demand curve to the second seller; and

receiving a modified price for the second featured item from the second seller.

3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving a communication from a buyer of the buyers that contains an offer for the first featured item; and

receiving a communication from the same buyer that contains an offer for the second featured item.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 3 wherein the first flash demand curve indicates that the buyer has also made an offer for the second featured item.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an instruction from the first seller that modifies the featured item in the on-line group-buying sale to include at least one additional product/service.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the first flash demand curve is generated based on real-time offers of the buyers and wherein the first featured item unit offers are revocable offers, the method further comprising:

transmitting a message to the buyers stating that subsequently received offers from the buyers will be treated as irrevocable; and

receiving further communications from the buyers, wherein at least some of the communications contain irrevocable offers.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an instruction from the first seller to close the on-line group-buying sale.

8. (Withdrawn) A method for determining demand for a featured item in an on-line group-buying sale, comprising:

receiving buyers into a negotiating room, wherein the negotiating room provides communication support between the buyers and a first seller of the featured item;

conducting a first on-line group-buying sale, wherein the first on-line group-buying sale is conducted in association with the buyers in the negotiating room;

producing at least one flash demand curve for the first featured item using offers received from the buyers of the first on-line group-buying sale;

providing the at least one flash demand curve to the first seller, wherein the first seller uses the at least one flash demand curve to create a sale demand curve for the featured item; and

conducting a second on-line group-buying sale of the featured item using the sale demand curve.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

conducting a third on-line group-buying sale, wherein the third on-line group-buying sale is conducted in association with the buyers in the negotiating room;

producing at least another flash demand curve for the featured item using offers received from the buyers of the third on-line group-buying sale; and

providing the at least another flash demand curve to the first seller, wherein the first seller creates the sale demand curve for the featured item using the at least another flash demand curve.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 9 wherein the seller modifies the first featured item during the third on-line group-buying sale to include at least another product/service, the method further comprising:

receiving from the seller an identification of products/services included in the first featured item for the second on-line group-buying sale before conducting the second on-line group-buying sale.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 wherein the second on-line group-buying sale begins before the first on-line group-buying sale using a current demand curve, the method further comprising:

replacing the current demand curve for the featured item in the second online group-buying sale with the sale demand curve.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 wherein the first on-line group-buying sale includes a second seller and a second featured item, the method further comprising:

providing at least one communication between the buyers and the second seller to the first seller.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

storing the at least one flash demand curve in a data repository.

14-25. (Canceled).

26. (Withdrawn) A method for determining a flash demand curve for a featured item offered by a seller in an on-line group-buying sale, comprising:

receiving an initial price for the featured item from the seller;

initiating the on-line group-buying sale for the featured item after receiving the initial price from the seller;

receiving offers for the featured item from buyers, wherein the received offers include prices equal to or less than the initial price;

constructing the flash demand curve; and

providing the flash demand curve to the seller.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

receiving a modified price for the first featured item from the seller after the flash demand curve has been provided to the seller;

displaying the modified price to the buyers;

receiving offers for the featured item from buyers, wherein the received offers include prices equal to or less than the modified price;

constructing the new flash demand curve; and providing the new flash demand curve to the seller.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, further comprising:

receiving an instruction to determine a new flash demand curve;

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26 wherein the flash demand curve is constructed by plotting received offers on a graph according to price and cumulative number of offers received at or below each price.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

receiving an instruction to determine the flash demand curve after the initiation of the on-line group-buying sale.

31-49. (Canceled).

50. (Withdrawn) A system for determining demand for a featured item offered in an on-line group-buying sale by at least one seller, comprising:

an on-line group-buying mechanism configured to conduct the on-line group-buying sale for the featured item;

a message receiver and transmitter configured to receive buyer communications, wherein at least some of the buyer communications contain offers for the featured item;

a voting mechanism configured to receive the offers from the message receiver and transmitter and calculate a flash demand curve using the offers; and

an operator representative configured to provide the flash demand curve to the at least one seller.

51. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 50, further comprising:

an outgoing message transmitter configured to send a message to at least one buyer announcing the beginning of the on-line group-buying sale.

52. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 51 wherein the outgoing message transmitter is configured to send the message via at least one of a wireless communications format and a television communications format.

53. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 50 wherein the message receiver and transmitter is configured to process buyer communications using at least one of a chat format, an auditorium chat format, a threaded message/newsgroup format, and a message board format.

54. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 50, further comprising:
an operator representative configured to announce the initiation of an auditorium chat forum to the buyers over an electronic network.

55. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 53, wherein the electronic network is at least one of a cable network, the Internet, and the public switched telephone network.

56. (Withdrawn) A system for selling featured items offered by a seller to buyers, comprising:
a negotiating room configured to sell the featured items using an on-line group-buying sale, wherein the negotiating room includes a voting mechanism configured to calculate at least one flash demand curve for the featured items using offers received from the buyers; and

an on-line group-buying mechanism configured to sell the featured items using a sale demand curve developed from the at least one flash demand curve.

57. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 56 wherein the negotiating room further comprises:

a message receiver and transmitter configured to receive buyer communications, wherein at least some of the buyer communications contain offers for the featured items.

58. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 56 wherein the on-line group-buying mechanism begins selling the featured items using an initial demand curve before the online group-buying sale in the negotiating room begins, the system further comprising:

a seller representative configured to send an instruction to the on-line group-buying mechanism to replace the initial demand curve with the sale demand curve.

59-65. (Canceled).

66. (Withdrawn) A data processing system that provides communications between buyers and a first seller during an on-line group-buying sale for a first featured item, the data processing system including negotiating room software executable on the data processing system and configured to transmit communications from the buyers to the first seller, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the first featured item, the data processing system further configured to produce a first flash demand curve for the first featured item using the offers for the first featured item and configured to provide the first flash demand curve to the first seller.

67. (Withdrawn) The data processing system of claim 66 wherein the on-line group-buying sale has a second featured item associated with a second seller, the data processing system further configured to transmit communications from the buyers to the second seller, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the second featured item; the data processing system further configured to produce a second flash demand curve for the

second featured item using the offers for the second featured item and configured to provide the second flash demand curve to the second seller.

68. (Withdrawn) The data processing system of claim 66 wherein the data processing system is further configured to receive a modified price for the first featured item from the first seller.

69. (Withdrawn) The data processing system of claim 66 wherein the data processing system is further configured to receive an instruction from the first seller that modifies the first featured item in the on-line group-buying sale to include at least one additional product/service.

70. (Withdrawn) A data processing system that determines demand for a featured item during an on-line group-buying sale, the data processing system including negotiating room software executable on the data processing system and configured to initiate a first on-line group-buying sale, wherein the first on-line group-buying sale is conducted in association with buyers and a seller, the data processing system further configured to produce at least one flash demand curve for the featured item using offers received from the buyers of the first on-line group-buying sale, configured to provide the at least one flash demand curve to the seller, wherein the seller uses the at least one flash demand curve to create a sale demand curve for the featured item, and configured to initiate a second on-line group-buying sale of the featured item using the sale demand curve.

71-96. (Canceled).

97. (Withdrawn) A graphical user interface for an on-line group-buying commerce system, the system executed on at least one computer system, the graphical user interface comprising:

a first display area for displaying a description of a product offered in an online group-buying sale provided by the on-line group-buying commerce system;

a second display area for receiving a selection indicating an offer to purchase the product;

a third display area displaying real-time messages sent by buyers and a seller related to the product; and

a fourth display area displaying an input interface in which a user may enter a message

related to the product to be displayed in the second display area; the first, second, third, and fourth display areas concurrently displayed in the graphical user interface.

98. (Withdrawn) The graphical user interface of claim 97, wherein the first display area is configured to display at least two different prices for the product during the on-line group-buying sale.

99. (Withdrawn) The graphical user interface of claim 97, the graphical user interface further comprising a fifth display area for displaying a demand curve generated based on offers for the product, the fifth display area concurrently displayed with the other display areas.

100. (Withdrawn) The graphical user interface of claim 97, the graphical user interface comprising a fifth display area for displaying a summary of on-line group-buying

offers for the product, the fifth display area concurrently displayed with the other display areas.

101. (Withdrawn) The graphical user interface of claim 97, further comprising a display for displaying one of a representation of a zoom, modify, update, refresh, or accept function.

102. (Withdrawn) The graphical user interface of claim 97, further comprising an interface by which wherein a user may make a selection indicating a request from a buyer to communicate directly with the seller.

103. (Withdrawn) A method for displaying data on a display device in support of an on-line group-buying sale, comprising:

displaying a description of a product offered in the online group-buying sale provided by the on-line group-buying commerce system;

receiving a selection indicating an offer to purchase the product;

displaying real-time messages responsive to a voting mechanism for soliciting input from potential buyers in the online group-buying sale related to the product; and

receiving a message related to the product to be displayed through an input interface.

104. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 103, further comprising simultaneously displaying the description of the product offered, real-time messages sent by buyers related to the product, and an input interface for receiving a message related to the product.

105. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 103, further comprising displaying a demand curve generated based on offers for the product.

106. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 103, further comprising displaying a summary of on-line group-buying offers for the product.

107. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 103, further comprising displaying one of a representation of a zoom, modify, update, refresh, or accept function.

108. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 103, further comprising receiving a selection indicating a request from a buyer to communicate directly with the seller.

109. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 103.

110. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 104.

111. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 105.

112. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 106.

113. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 107.

114. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 108.

115. (Withdrawn) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 109.

116-121. (Canceled).

122. (New) A computer-implemented method of facilitating communications between a seller and buyers participating together as a buying group during an on-line group-buying sale of a product offered by the seller, the method comprising:

providing an electronic negotiation room to the buyers through which a

message from one buyer to another buyer can be transmitted during

the on-line group-buying sale;

transmitting a voting request from a seller to the buyers asking the buyers to

vote on a hypothetical offer for the product at a price from the seller;

receiving and processing voting responses from the buyers to the voting

request; and

providing the processed responses to the seller.

123. (New) The method of 122, wherein the responses comprise hypothetical acceptances and hypothetical rejections of the hypothetical offer.

124. (New) The method of 122, further comprising:

receiving from buyers counteroffers to the hypothetical offer;

processing the counteroffers; and

providing the processed counteroffers to the seller.

125. (New) The method of 122, wherein processing comprises generating a demand curve for the product based on the voting responses.

126. (New) The method of 122, further comprising:

transmitting a second voting request from a seller to the buyers asking the

buyers to vote on a second hypothetical offer for the product at a
second price from the seller;

receiving voting responses to the second voting request from the buyers;

processing voting responses to the first request from buyers together with

voting responses to the second voting request from the buyers; and

providing the processed voting responses to the seller.

127. (New) The method of 126, wherein processing comprises generating a demand curve based on voting responses to the first request and voting responses to the second voting request.

128. (New) The method of 122, further comprising providing the processed responses to the buyers.

129. (New) A computer-readable medium including computer-executable instructions for facilitating communications between a seller and buyers participating together as a buying group during an on-line group-buying sale of a product offered by the seller, the instructions for:

providing an electronic negotiation room to the buyers through which a
message from one buyer to another buyer can be transmitted during
the on-line group-buying sale;
transmitting a voting request from a seller to the buyers asking the buyers to
vote on a hypothetical offer for the product at a price from the seller;
receiving and processing voting responses from the buyers to the voting
request; and
providing the processed responses to the seller.

130. The medium of 129, wherein the responses comprise hypothetical
acceptances and hypothetical rejections of the hypothetical offer.

131. (New) The medium of 129, further comprising instructions for:
receiving from buyers counteroffers to the hypothetical offer;
processing the counteroffers; and
providing the processed counteroffers to the seller..

132. (New) The medium of 129, wherein processing comprises generating a
demand curve for the product based on the voting responses.

133. (New) The medium of 129, further comprising instructions for:
transmitting a second voting request from a seller to the buyers that asks the
buyers to vote on a second hypothetical offer for the product at a
second price from the seller;
receiving voting responses to the second voting request from the buyers;

processing voting responses to the first request from buyers together with
voting responses to the second voting request from the buyers; and
providing the processed voting responses to the seller.

134. (New) The medium of 133, wherein processing comprises generating a demand curve based on voting responses to the first request and voting responses to the second voting request.

135. (New) The medium of 129, further comprising instructions for providing the processed responses to the buyers.

136. (New) A system for facilitating communications between a seller and buyers participating together as a buying group during an on-line group-buying sale of a product offered by the seller, the system comprising:

an on-line negotiation room in which buyers can transmit and receive
messages during the on-line group-buying sale;

a voting request transmitter that provides a voting request from a seller to the
buyers that asks the buyers to vote on a hypothetical offer for the
product at a price from the seller; and

a voting mechanism for receiving voting responses from the buyers to the
voting request, processing the responses, and providing the processed
responses to the seller.

137. (New) A negotiating room system for facilitating communications between a seller and buyers participating together as a buying group during an on-line group-buying sale of a product offered by the seller, the system comprising:

a product database containing product information for a plurality of products;
a negotiating room associated with a product described in the product database, the product offered by the seller during the on-line group-buying sale;
a messaging system for providing electronic messages from one or more buyers to the seller; and
an auto-responder that receives electronic messages from the one or more buyer, and, for each message, parses the message, selects response content based on the parsed message, generates a response using the response content, and automatically provides the generated response to the one or more buyer.

138. (New) A computer-implemented method of facilitating communications between a seller and buyers participating together as a buying group during an on-line group-buying sale of a product offered by the seller, the method comprising:

accessing product information about the product from a product database containing product information about a plurality of products;

providing a negotiating room for seller communication about the product using the information, the product offered by the seller during the on-line group-buying sale;

providing electronic messages from one or more buyers to the seller; and

receiving electronic messages from the one or more buyer, and, for each message, parsing the message, selecting response content based on the parsed message, generating a response using the response content, and automatically providing the generated response to the one or more buyer.